

THE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY

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Happy New Year from ODA!

Happy New Year from all of us at the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). As we welcome a new year, you can be confident knowing that ODA will retain its commitment to our mission, vision, and core values. In addition, our commitment to providing exceptional customer service remains. My team is working hard to utilize the resources we have been given in the most prudent and cost-conscious manner possible.



I have had the pleasure of working at ODA for more than 20 years. With the departure of former Director Alexis Taylor, former Gov. Kate Brown appointed me as acting Director. I will continue until Gov. Tina Kotek names a permanent director. Thank you to everyone who has reached out to me with encouragement and confidence in my leadership to carry on in this critical role. I am humbled and blessed by all the outreach.

I plan to lead the agency through this transition and guide us through the 2023 legislative session and beyond with great staff and our agriculture partners. In addition, I am looking forward to working with Gov. Kotek and the governor's staff to carry out the critical work of serving Oregon's citizens across our beautiful state.

The chief task before lawmakers this session is passing a state budget for the biennium that begins July 1 and ends June 30, 2025. First, ODA has submitted its recommended budget; next, Gov. Kotek will introduce her recommended budget. Lastly, the Legislature will create a state budget they will vote on and approve before the session ends. ODA is working closely with lawmakers to provide education and background on our services so they can make informed decisions when building the agency's budget. Assistant Director Jonathan Sandau will be leading this work for ODA.

We are mindful of the challenges and opportunities our growers, processors, and producers face. An ongoing challenge for the agency is recruiting and hiring new staff. Last year several long-time employees retired. Their total years of service added up to more than 300 years! That is a lot of experience walking out the door. While the agency

bids farewell to our long-timers, we are working hard to build a new talented group of professionals excited to make new working relationships to benefit the industry for years. Please join us in welcoming our new staff. I am grateful to have such a self-motivated and dedicated team to work with.

We will experience many changes in the coming year, but together, we can succeed. May 2023 be filled with many accomplishments and happiness. I wish you and your loved ones a happy new year.

Sincerely,

Lauren

COMING SOON

STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY MEETING

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2023

Location: ODA Salem Office, Basement Hearing Room + virtual option

(503) 986-4554

oda.direct/boardagriculture

PESTICIDE ANALYTICAL & RESPONSE CENTER (PARC) BOARD MEETING

MARCH 15, 2023 • 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: ODA Salem Office

635 Capitol St NE, Salem, OR 97301

(971) 600-7447

oda.direct/PARC

REMINDER

COMPLETE THE AG CENSUS

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 6, 2023

agcounts.usda.gov

ODA COMMODITY COMMISSION MANAGER RETIRES

Longtime ODA Commodity Commission Program Manager Kris Anderson retired on December 31, 2022. Anderson served as program manager for the commissions for nearly 20 years. During that time, she saw several commissions come and go and led them through technological changes, rules, and training. One of the biggest challenges in managing the commissions is recruiting applicants as positions open up. Commodity commissioners are Oregon public officials who volunteer their time for the economic betterment of the commodity. Anderson's deep connections to the agricultural community helped ODA fill those positions with strongly qualified candidates. All 23 commodity commissions operate with oversight from ODA.

Each year, commissioners develop and approve a budget using commodity assessments and other funds available for projects, including non-branded promotion, research, and education. Commissioners determine the projects that will best benefit the commodity. Anderson worked closely with commissioners as they set priorities and recruited and filled vital leadership staff positions. For example, the 2021 Oregon Legislature authorized a Hemp Commission. Anderson helped establish the framework to begin operating to improve conditions in that industry.

"It has been my honor and pleasure to serve our agriculture industry over the years," said Anderson. "Thank all of you who have helped me serve this

important segment of our state's economy and communities. But, most of all, I would like to thank all the commissioners who have and continue to serve their industries. You volunteer your time away from your businesses and families to serve on commissions. Your commitment, determination, and sacrifice inspire me. Getting to know each of you and seeing your passion for making things better for our farmers, ranchers, and fishing families have been my joy."

Anderson was one of 13 ODA employees who retired in 2022. Most retired with over 20 years of service, in all 314 years. ODA is working to recruit and hire a new commodity commission program manager.

If you or someone you know is interested, please watch for the job posting. In the meantime, please contact ODA's Market Access and Certification Programs Area Director, Jess Paulson, at jess.paulson@oda.oregon.gov or 503-507-9313.



ODA ISSUES TREE DEBRIS QUARANTINE IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

THE TEMPORARY QUARANTINE PROHIBITS TREE MATERIALS FROM ALL PLANT PARTS OF ASH, OLIVE, AND THE WHITE FRINGE TREE, FROM MOVEMENT OUTSIDE WASHINGTON COUNTY.

In response to the discovery of emerald ash borer (EAB) in Oregon, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has adopted a temporary EAB quarantine, limiting the movement of ash, olive, and white fringe tree materials from Washington County. EAB is deadly to the native trees. ODA confirmed EAB in several ash trees in Forest Grove in June 2022, the first sighting on the West Coast. So far, the invasive species appears to be contained within a 15-mile radius inside Washington County.

The Washington County EAB quarantine restricts the movement of several tree materials including but not limited to logs, green lumber, nursery stock, scion wood, bud wood, chips, mulch, stumps, roots, branches, and firewood of hardwood species. ODA is establishing several processing and disposal resources in the area to limit the movement of ash, olive, and the white fringe tree materials within the quarantine area. For a list of disposal sites, and more information on EAB, please visit: [ODA direct/EAB](#).

Cody Holthouse, a manager for ODA's insect and pest prevention and management program, said the devastation by EAB is a slow process, and can take two or three years for a tree to start showing signs. Holthouse also said there are 1,600 ash trees within a 15-mile radius around the spot of the initial sighting at Joseph Gale Elementary in Forest Grove. So far, 56 of those trees



have been confirmed to be infested, while another 121 are suspected to be infested.

The beetle can fly up to 10 miles at a time but prefers to stay in one place for years until food is depleted before moving to the next closest tree. In the Midwest, where it was first spotted in North America in Detroit in 2002, it proved extremely durable by withstanding freezing Great Lakes winters.

ODA publishes a [map online](#) of surveyed and infested trees. Oregon State University also publishes a page for [best practices to protect trees](#). Several state, regional, county, and city-wide partners are working together to educate the public on how to help slow the spread of EAB. Oregon has 16 native species of ash tree, including Oregon ash.

AGRICULTURE OVERTIME COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS START JANUARY 1, 2023

**THIS IS A JOINT MESSAGE FROM DEPARTMENT OF
REVENUE AND BUREAU OF LABOR & INDUSTRIES.**

Starting January 1, 2023, employers will be required to pay overtime to agricultural workers after they work 55 hours in one workweek. If employees perform nonagricultural work, then overtime must be paid after 40 hours of work in a workweek. There are some situations where an employer may be exempt from paying overtime and minimum wage. For more information and FAQs, visit the [Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries' \(BOLI\) Minimum Wage and Overtime in Agriculture webpage](#). You may also contact BOLI at: ag.overtime@boli.oregon.gov.

BOLI has teamed with the Oregon Department of Revenue (DOR) to engage with external stakeholders and share program information. DOR is responsible for facilitating the application for an income tax credit for overtime paid to agricultural workers by qualifying employers.

Agriculture employers who qualify may apply for a tax credit for a percentage of the agriculture overtime paid throughout 2023. They will be able to submit an electronic application to DOR between January 1 and January 31, 2024. To learn more about the tax credit and FAQs, visit the [DOR's Employer Tax Credit for Agriculture Worker Overtime Pay webpage](#). For general questions about the credit, contact DOR at: ag.overtime@dor.oregon.gov.

Starting in January 2023, DOR implementation will focus on the tax credit application requirements, including developing rules, soliciting stakeholder input on the application process, and continuing informational outreach.

For updates on DOR implementation of House Bill 4002, subscribe to DOR's agriculture overtime pay [bulletins](#).

2022 GRASSHOPPER AND MORMON CRICKET SURVEY

Since 1953, rangelands in eastern Oregon have been surveyed for grasshoppers and Mormon crickets by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) State Plant Health Director's office. Historically, these efforts have been conducted on public lands and help track pest population dynamics. In 2022, the Oregon State Legislature approved Senate Bill 5561, which allocated money to assist private landowners with grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression.

These surveys assess economically infested acres in eastern Oregon and use this data to guide suppression efforts. In 2022, 6,364 sites were visited: 42% (2,833) of these sites contained economic density levels with an average of 73 grasshoppers per square yard (an economic density level is eight or more grasshoppers per square yard). Approximately 5.3 million acres across 17 counties in eastern Oregon and one in western Oregon were estimated to contain economically infested locations.

Harney County had the most infested acreage at 1.5 million, and Malheur County was second with 1.3 million. Harney and Malheur Counties accounted for half of the total economically infested acreage.

The northern region (Hood River, Sherman, Gilliam, Sherman, Umatilla, Wheeler, Grant, and Wallowa Counties) of eastern Oregon had a much lower grasshopper density than in 2021 due to the cool, wet weather in the spring. Cool, wet weather conditions in spring promote fungal pathogens capable of negatively impacting grasshoppers after hatch, reducing population size. Conversely, the hatch occurred after the cool, wet weather in eastern Oregon's southern regions (Klamath, Lake, Harney, and Malheur Counties). Therefore grasshopper densities in this area were much greater, similar to levels observed in 2021.

Each survey season, ODA sends out a weekly report to cooperators, stakeholders, land managers, and other interested parties by the ODA. If you are interested in receiving these weekly reports via email, visit oda.fyi/GMCWeeklyReports.

If you are not interested in receiving the weekly or annual reports but want to get info about future grasshopper program updates, sign up at oda.fyi/GMCInfo.

For additional resources, visit [ODA's grasshopper and Mormon cricket webpage](#).

THE BIG STINK: HOW ODA ENTOMOLOGIST MAX RAGOZZINO RACKED UP 2 MILLION VIEWS ON YOUTUBE



In November 2022, British YouTuber Tom Scott put a call out to his 5.7 million subscribers, asking for video ideas. Known for his wide variety of educational videos, Tom covers topics ranging from the science behind zero-g flights to how the U.S. Postal Service deciphers bad handwriting. As a result, he has become one of the most popular creators on the platform.

So when ODA entomologist Max Ragozzino submitted a pitch about his team's efforts to control agricultural pests like the brown marmorated stink bug through the release of samurai wasps (*Trissolcus japonicus*), he didn't expect to receive a response. But, much to his surprise, Tom replied to Max's email and asked to set up an initial call to hear more details about ODA's biocontrol work. Serendipitously, Tom already had plans to film with a healthcare startup located just south of Salem in Albany. *Story continued on Page 4*

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The Agriculture Quarterly (ISSN 0897-7143)
is published quarterly & distributed free of charge.



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“Tom said, ‘Great, I’ll be in Oregon the first week of December. Does that work for you?’” recalled Max. “It was a very fast turnaround.”

Upon arriving at ODA’s lab on Hawthorne Avenue, Tom received a tour of the facility and a crash course in biocontrol entomology. Max explained how ODA raises colonies of both stink bugs and wasps, as stink bug eggs are needed to rear populations of *T. japonicus*. When released, the wasps locate stink bug egg masses on a plant, and lay their eggs within the stink bugs’. From there, the growing wasp destroys the stink bug egg from the inside out, disrupting the pest’s lifecycle and ability to wreak havoc on a crop.

“He was starting pretty blank. He said he doesn’t normally do a lot of natural resources videos,” said Max. “When you’re trying to reach a broad audience like that, you want to make sure people are on board from the get-go. ‘Samurai wasp’ sounds kind of scary.”

According to Max, the pair filmed for nearly two hours. “It was really cool to hear 45 minutes of my rambling get cut down into 4 minutes. It was very succinct. Nothing of value was cut. It ended up being a very tight, well-edited video.”

Since its premiere in mid-December, the video has amassed over 2 million views worldwide. In addition, at least ten individuals have reached out to Max, asking for more information about the project. Unfortunately, *T. japonicus* colonies cannot be shipped across state lines due to federal regulations, but that hasn’t stopped Max from sharing available literature and research with those seeking to control the brown marmorated stink bug in

their regions.

“Overall, I think the reception was as good as possible,” said Max. “I had told my family about the video, but my younger brother never responded to my text. The day the video went live, he sat down for lunch and saw there was a new Tom Scott video. He thought, ‘Oh, it’s about wasps – I should tell Max about this.’ And then I appeared on his TV.”

The brown marmorated stink bug is not a small problem in Oregon. It is known to feed on over 100 different plants, including Oregon’s top commodities like hazelnuts, apples, pears, and wine grapes. For example, it is estimated that the pest was responsible for 14 percent of all hazelnut crop loss in 2021 – significantly more damage than other agricultural pest.

After two years of successful releases at field sites across the state, Max and his team are looking forward to increasing the number of wasps released in 2023. “We hope to release at least 30,000 wasps, but I’m shooting for more,” he said. Releases occur between May and September, and anywhere from 50 to 2,000 wasps are released per site. As minor pollinators, *T. japonicus* tend to thrive in natural areas with a diversity of flowering plants for them to feed on. They are also very sensitive to the same insecticides used to control the stink bug, so they need some natural area adjacent to commercial agriculture.

If you are a commercial grower in Oregon interested in participating in a *T. japonicus* release, please contact Max Ragozzino at max.ragozzino@oda.oregon.gov. If you haven’t seen Tom and Max’s video, you can watch it [here](#) or visit @TomScottGo on YouTube.